Supported by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), Abt Associates Inc. conducted a study of seven areas in which many School Resource Officer (SRO) programs have struggled:

• recruitment,
• screening,
• retention,
• training,
• supervision,
• identifying sources of program funding, and
• maintaining program funding.

The report has been written for:

• first-line **SRO program supervisors**;

• **police and sheriff's department administrators** interested in improving their SRO programs;

• **school district administrators** concerned that the SROs in their schools meet their goals for the program; and

• law enforcement and school district personnel considering **starting** an SRO program.

Background to the Report

During site visits to 19 SRO programs as part of a National Assessment of School Resource Office Programs that Abt Associates Inc. completed in 2004 for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), project staff learned that many SRO program supervisors and coordinators have experienced problems—and often continue to have difficulty—with the seven areas of programming identified above. Reports prepared by the COPS Office, the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), and the North Carolina Center for the Prevention of School Violence have also concluded that many SRO programs experience difficulty in one or more of these seven areas of program operations.

As a result, the COPS Office awarded a cooperative agreement to Abt Associates to document the approaches a number of respected SRO programs have used to address each of these troublesome areas of program operations. The information in the report is intended to enable other SRO programs—and jurisdictions that are considering starting SRO programs—**to benefit from the experiences of these selected programs by adopting, adapting, or improving on their approaches**.

Study Methodology

We obtained information for the report from 34 programs.[1]

(1)   We collected data on the seven focuses of the report during ***site visits to nine SRO programs*** selected at the recommendation of experts and based on screening calls to the program coordinators (see the box "Selected Features of the Nine Sites" and appendix A, "How the Nine Programs Were Chosen").

(2)   As part of the process of selecting the 9 sites to visit, we screened 23 programs. The report incorporates information from ***6 of the sites that did not make the "cut" for a site visit*** (see appendix A for the names of these sites).

(3)   We used ***information we had collected previously*** in these topic areas as part of the above-mentioned National Assessment of SRO Programs conducted for NIJ that addressed all facets of SRO programming (see appendix B, "The 19 National Assessment Sites and How They Were Chosen").

(4)   We obtained ***additional, in-depth information from the 19 National Assessment programs*** related to the present project's seven areas of interest during telephone calls with three to six program participants at each site.

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[1]*The report also provides information about a few other programs based on newspaper accounts, conversations with SROs and SRO program supervisors at conferences, and comments on the report by three anonymous reviewers.*

Selected Features of the Nine Sites Visited Expressly to Examine the Seven Study Focuses					
Location and Sponsor	**Population**	**Square Miles**	**Date Program Began**	**Number of Full-Time SROs**	**Number of Schools Served**
Delaware State Police	600,000	2,000	1994	25	29
Fontana, California, Police Department	150,000	38	1994	8	8
King County, Washington, Sheriff's Office	1.7 million	2,126	1995	9	9
Marshall, Minnesota, Police Department	13,000	7	1999	1	3
Maury County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Department	70,000	613	1998	20	19
Olympia, Washington, Police Department	42,000	15	1999	3	17
Palm Beach County, Florida, School District Police Department	1.2 million	2,200	1978	130	165
Salem, New Hampshire, Police Department	40,000	36	1995	2	2
Sarasota County, Florida, Sheriff's Office	400,000	580	1980	27	36

Limitations to the Study

The report does not purport to present how the "typical" SRO program or a random sample of programs has addressed the seven program components. Instead, our goal was to include a variety of programs that appeared to have made a substantial commitment to addressing one or more of these problem areas so that other programs could benefit from their experience. There are, of course, many other SRO programs not included in the report that have also addressed these problem areas creatively and thoroughly. Resource limitations prevented us from including all of them in the study.

Despite this limitation, the study includes a range of different types of SRO programs, including programs that:

• serve single jurisdictions and multiple jurisdictions (e.g., two or more counties, an entire State);
• serve jurisdictions with small and large populations and few and many schools;
• serve a single school district and multiple school districts;
• are sponsored by police departments, sheriff's offices, a State police department, and one or more school districts;
• serve one or more high schools, middle schools, elementary schools, or combinations of grade levels;
• involve a single SRO, several SROs, and many SROs;
• make a single SRO responsible for a single school or for multiple schools, or place more than one SRO in a school; and
• involve small, medium-sized, and large law enforcement agencies.

Such a large variety of program models suggests the range of options program planners can consider in designing a new program—and the variety of configurations that existing programs can consider adopting to enhance their efforts.

In addition, because of the tremendous variety in program design options, the specific practices this report describes may not be feasible, effective, or needed by other programs with different configurations. At the most basic level, for example, a supervisory approach that a program with 25 SROs has found useful may be completely unworkable in a program with a single SRO. As a result, **_programs need to consider whether the procedures presented in this report will be appropriate in their jurisdictions_**.

Other Sources of Information About SRO Programs

The National Institute of Justice has recently made available on its Web site (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/) three reports that Abt Associates Inc. prepared as part of the National Assessment of SRO Programs.

- The *National Survey of SRO Programs and Affiliated Schools* summarizes the results of 322 responses to a mail survey of law enforcement agencies with SRO programs and 108 responses from affiliated schools.

- *Case Studies of 19 School Resource Officer (SRO) Programs* provides in-depth descriptions of each program's history, SROs, program activities, and program monitoring and evaluation efforts.

- *Comparison of Program Activities and Lessons Learned Among 19 School Resource Officer (SRO) Programs* compares the 19 programs in terms of several key dimensions of program operation, with a focus on lessons learned.

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) has prepared a number of reports on SRO program operations. Contact: www.nasro.org. The Center for the Prevention of School Violence in the North Carolina also has several reports on SRO programs. Contact: www.ncdjjdp.org/cpsv.

Organization of the Report/Site Profiles

A separate chapter addresses each of the seven program areas. Some readers may choose to read some chapters and not others. As a result, in order to make it possible to read each chapter independently we have at times repeated the same or similar information in more than one chapter. For the same reason, readers will find relevant appendix materials at the end of each chapter rather than collected at the end of the report.

At the end of each chapter (with the exception of the chapters on recruiting SROs and identifying sources of funding), one or more case studies provide detailed descriptions of how selected programs have made an especially comprehensive or innovative effort to deal with the chapter topic. Brief summaries of these programs follow, along with name of the chapter or chapters where the case studies may be found.

Fontana, California, Police Department (151 sworn)

Chapter 5 Training
Chapter 7 Funding

SRO Program Basics
started 1994
8 SROs
8 middle schools

Community Demographics
population: 150,000
square miles: 38

Background Description
The Fontana Police Department promotes flexibility in program design and innovative problem solving. As a result, it assigns officers who are capable of working independently to solve the problems in their schools. It also believes that SRO performance should be based on creativity and innovation and evaluates them on these standards. The department's focus on   innovation has brought it statewide and national recognition, tributes it presents to school boards and the city council to help maintain the program's $949,000 annual funding.

Garner, North Carolina, Police Department (53 sworn)

Chapter 3 Screening

SRO Program Basics
started 1993
3 SROs
1 high school, 2 middle schools

Community Demographics
population: 20,000
square miles: 13.53

Background Description
The SRO program began when the town's high school principal and the president of the Parent Teacher Association approached the chief of police following a school shooting in a nearby city. The amount of crime in each school influences the ratio of time each SRO spends on law enforcement, education, and counseling. One middle school SRO spends only 20 percent of his time on law enforcement, while the other two SROs spend about 60 percent, including investigating crimes, filing petitions, going to court, and patrolling the campuses. All three SROs are involved in mentoring, including coaching sports teams. The approximate cost for the SRO program is $180,000 per year.

Marshall, Minnesota, Police Department (21 sworn)

Chapter 5 Training
Chapter 8 Maintaining Funding

SRO Program Basics
started 1999
1 SRO
1 high school, 1 alternative school, 1 junior high school

Community Demographics
population: 13,000
square miles: 6.5

Background Description
The school district started the program with a COPS in Schools grant as a relatively painless way of getting going and as a method of getting both parties committed to the program—the first year the police department contributed $26,000 and the school district $14,000 to the program's $80,000 cost. The program's one SRO—who turned down a promotion so he could remain in the position— spends about 40 percent time each on law enforcement and mentoring and 20 percent on teaching.

Maury County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Department (61 sworn)

Chapter 6 Supervision

SRO Program Basics
started 1998
20 SROs
19 high schools

Community Demographics
population: 70,000
square miles: 613

Background Description
The Maury County Sheriff's Department began its program in 1998 with 20 SROs serving all 19 high schools in the county. One SRO is assigned to each school, and one "floats," substituting for the other SROs and providing back-up as needed. One-third of all sworn deputies in the department are SROs. The distribution of officers' activities among the components of the triad model varies considerably among schools depending on each school's needs. The program's annual budget is $800,000.

Palm Beach County, Florida, School District Police Department

(148 sworn):
Chapter 5 Training
Chapter 6 Supervision

SRO Program Basics
started 1978
130 SROs in the schools
165 schools, K-12, 1-2 SROs per school

Community Demographics
population: 1.2 million
square miles: 2,200

Background Description
The Palm Beach County School District Police Department consists entirely of certified SROs, but 18 of the department's 148 sworn officers perform non-school related functions, including supervising the SROs. The department's $5.5 million budget, which also pays for the dispatch center and other activities, comes primarily from the school district, although the COPS Office has funded 63 SROs whom the school district has absorbed into the department's budget as Federal funding ends.

Sarasota County, Florida, Sheriff's Department (500 sworn)

Chapter 6 Supervision
Chapter 7 Identifying Sources of Program Funding
Chapter 8 Maintaining Funding

SRO Program Basics
started 1980
27 SROs
36 schools, K-12

Community Demographics
population: 400,000
square miles: 580

Background Description
The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has a written contract with the school district to provide two SROs at each high school, one at each middle school, and one for every two elementary schools. At the high school level, SROs engage first in law enforcement, then counseling, and then teaching. At the middle school level, they do more counseling, less law enforcement, and some teaching. At the elementary

level, they primarily teach and mentor. The school district administration provides the bureau free space and furniture in its district headquarters building. The sheriff's office and school district share almost equally the program's annual $2.4 million cost.

Schaumburg, Illinois, School District 54 (140 sworn)
Chapter 8 Maintaining Funding

SRO Program Basics
started 1995
5 SROs
5 junior high schools

Community Demographics
population: 75,000
square miles: 19

Background Description
The Schaumburg Police Department has a written contract with School District 54 to provide one SRO at each of the district's five junior high schools. Until recently, the school district paid for three-quarters of the officers' salaries. A school principal has always been the program coordinator. From the start, the SROs' focus has been primarily on teaching and mentoring, and only secondarily on law enforcement. The program's budget is $200,000.

Stark County, Ohio, Sheriff's Office (100 sworn officers)
Chapter 8 Maintaining Funding

SRO Program Basics
started 1999
5 SROs
5 high schools

Community Demographics
population: 400,000
square miles: 600

Background Description
The sheriff's office received COPS in Schools funding for five full-time officers beginning in 1999. The SROs work in five separate school districts that vary in size and degree of urbanization and socioeconomic development. Each school district's SRO and high school administrator have collaborated to tailor the program to the needs of their particular campus. As a result, the SROs vary in the degree to which they perform activities suggested by the SRO triad model.

The following individuals from among the many persons who provided information for this report have said that readers may contact them by telephone or e-mail for advice related to starting or enhancing an SRO program. In general, chiefs and school district administrators will have information about funding; SROs and SRO supervisors will be knowledgeable about recruiting, screening, training, and supervising SROs; and principals will have experience screening and supervising SROs.

Chief Paul T. Donovan
Salem Police Department
9 Veteran's Memorial Parkway
Salem NH 03079-3388
(603) 890-2350
pdonovan@salempd.com

Chief James P. Kelly
Palm Beach School District Police Department
Suite B-127
3330 Forest Hill Boulevard
West Palm Beach FL 33406
(561) 434-8435
Kelly@palmbeach.k12.fl.us

Chief Robert A. Yant
Marshall Division of Public Safety
611 West Main Street
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Captain Tim Carney
Commander, Youth Services Bureau
Sarasota County Sheriff's Office
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Captain Terry Holderness
Commander, Special Operations
Fontana Police Department
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Fontana CA 92335
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tholderness@fontana.org

Sergeant Richard Davies
Training Sergeant
Pine Bluff Police Department
200 East 8th Avenue
Pine Bluff Arkansas 71601
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Glenn Brunet, School Resource Officer
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(985) 876-2500 (TPSO)
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James Muir
Former Assistant Superintendent of Staff Operations
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Wade Nelson
Principal
Jane Addams Junior High School
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Schaumburg IL 60193
(847) 301-2110
WardNelson@sd54.k12.il.us

Assistant Principal Cynthia Celander
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Marshall MN 56258
(507) 537-6210
Cynthia.Celander@marshall.k12.mn.us

Appendix A
How the Nine Programs Were Selected for Site Visits

We started with an initial pool of 130 possible sites suggested by the COPS Office, staff of the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) and Corbin & Associates, and State SRO Association officers. We also included in the pool program runners-up in the selection of sites for inclusion in the National Assessment of School Resource Officer Programs (see appendix B).

From these programs, we developed a list of 23 programs that we telephoned for basic program information in order to screen them as possible site visit candidates. We selected the 23 programs for one or more of the following reasons:

(1)   One or more knowledgeable individuals recommended them.
(2)   We talked with the program coordinators and secured enough initial informa tion to decide they should be included in the screening.
(3)   The COPS Office suggested the programs might have comprehensive practices.
(4)   The programs provided diversity in terms of number of SROs, agency type, and geographic location and size.

We used three criteria for deciding which 9 programs and alternatives to recommend to the COPS Office for site visits:

(1)   The site appeared to have made a comprehensive and determined effort to implement procedures in at least several of the seven topic areas.
(2)   The site had written documentation in each area in which it appeared to have comprehensive procedures.
(3)   The site provided diversity in terms of:

   • number of SROs,
   • when the program began,
   • geographic location, and
   • type of participating law enforcement agency (municipal, county, school district, State).

The report incorporates information from the following six additional programs:

Broken Arrow, Oklahoma
Jefferson City, Missouri
Lakewood, Colorado
Scottsdale, Arizona
Virginia Beach, Virginia
Whittier, California.

Appendix B
The 19 National Assessment Sites and
How They Were Selected

Abt Associates conducted a National Assessment of School Resource Officer (SRO) Programs ("National Assessment") through a cooperative agreement with the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) supported by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office).

The purpose of the National Assessment was to identify what program "models" had been implemented, how programs had been implemented, and what lessons they might have for other programs. To obtain the information, Abt Associates and three subcontractors visited and telephoned participants from 19 SRO programs.

We selected the 19 programs through a rigorous screening process designed to include four different types of programs in terms of size of sponsoring law enforcement agency and how long the program had been in operation.

The 19 Programs Included in the National Assessment	
Large Established Programs (5) Chula Vista, California Pine Bluff, Arkansas Schaumburg, Illinois Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana Tucson, Arizona	**Large New Programs (4)** Albuquerque, New Mexico Oklahoma County, Oklahoma Stark County, Ohio West Orange, New Jersey
Small Established Programs (5) all in North Carolina Boone Garner Lenoir County Montgomery County Pasquotank County	**Small New Programs (5)** all in Kentucky names not identified to preserve confidentiality

Additional information about the National Assessment, including the process for selecting the sites, may be found in "National Assessment of School Resource Officer Programs: Final Project History," available from the National Institute of Justice Web site, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/.